



NEWS RELEASE

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HUNTING AND RECREATION COOPERATIVES PROPOSED FOR NORTHEAST AND SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA

Kearney, Neb., Dec. 15, 2005 – USDA Rural Development’s Lennis Hodgson, area director for Nebraska, presented Nebraska Grain and Feed Association (NGF) with a \$44,700 symbolic funding check today that will have the potential to impact the business economy of 22 Nebraska counties.

“Congratulations to Nebraska Grain and Feed Association on their securing a rural business opportunity grant,” stated Lennis Hodgson, area director for USDA Rural Development. “People spend money where they live, work and play. The cooperatives’ concept will offer to the public the recreation of hunting in expanded areas; attracting more hunters that will spend money locally during their hunting trips.”

NGF will utilize the USDA Rural Development rural business opportunity grant (RBOG) to design, implement, evaluate and replicate a hunting and recreation cooperative in Nebraska. Two pilot projects are to be sponsored; one area consisting of a 17 county area in southwest Nebraska and the other, a five county area of northeast Nebraska (Arthur, Banner, Box Butte, Cedar, Chase, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Dixon, Dundy, Garden, Grant, Keith, Kimball, Knox, Morrill, Perkins, Pierce, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux and Wayne). The areas will allow for reasonable access to large urban populations, vast and open farmland, and a large and willing base of area landowners and patrons. The projects could create increased income for landowners and a rise in local economic activity due to an influx of out-of-area and out-of-state hunters and those seeking recreation.

“This concept has been around for some time, however the exciting component is that NGF member elevators and cooperatives are willing to step-up and serve as the catalyst in coordinating the project,” stated Patrick Ptacek, executive vice president for NGF. “The idea is to offer another service our members provide for producers by serving as a recreational clearing house in enrolling land, developing effective methods for recruiting and enhancing the experience for producers and hunting and recreation cooperative members, and building community support for value-added services.”

Rural business opportunity grants (RBOG) are awarded to public bodies, non-profits, Indian Tribes and cooperatives to provide technical assistance for business development and to conduct economic planning in rural areas.

For additional information, contact your local USDA Rural Development office or the USDA Rural Development State Office at (402) 437-5558, (402) 437-5093 (TDY); Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, NE 68508. Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/> to locate an office nearest you.

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